

## **TIMBERLINE TRAIL PROJECT HISTORY**

Coconino County Parks & Recreation

January 2009

- 2001            Doney Park-Timberline-Fernwood Area Plan identified need for a non-motorized trail system to access public lands, adjacent neighborhoods, and existing/proposed trail systems.
- 2001-3           County convened an interagency trails planning team
- 2002            November: Voters approved Coconino Parks & Open Space (CPOS) to raise \$33 million for park development and open space acquisition. Timberline Trail is the backbone of the Doney Park Area Trails System project designated by voters to receive CPOS funding. CPOS will pay for trail construction.
- 2003            County Comprehensive Plan identified goals and strategies for developing urban trails systems in the Flagstaff area to provide for connectivity to public lands and trail networks, provide for non-motorized circulation, and protect natural resources. It specifically encourages the development of trails designed to accommodate a high level of use in order to minimize environmental impacts.
- 2003            April: Supervisor Archuleta convened a neighborhood meeting to gauge interest in Forest access from Fernwood and Timberline areas. Ten attendees focused on Forest access and inappropriate OHV use.
- 2003            April: County wrote CNF Peaks View district ranger about collaborating to develop Timberline Trail
- 2004            February: County convened a public meeting for residents interested in a trail system to link outlying neighborhoods to public areas in Flagstaff. Thirty persons participated. Priority destinations were Forest system trails and City of Flagstaff. Trail recreation goals were mountain biking, hiking/walking, horseback riding, and running/jogging.
- March, April, May, June, July: A trails advisory committee met monthly. Supervisors Archuleta and Hill, County Manager John Holmes, and Director Todd Graeff attended at least one. Around 15 citizens participated. The group named itself Northeast Peaks Trails Alliance.
- 2004            March-April: The Alliance distributed a trail questionnaire through the Summit Fire Department's newsletter and received 95 responses. Most respondents wanted a non-motorized recreation trail to provide Forest access and a safe pathway into city activity centers. *Summary available.*
- 2004            June, July, August: Alliance participates in 3-4 field trips to identify a proposed trail corridor, trailheads and access points. Following a presentation by Forest Recreation Officer, group determined to look at using existing Forest Service roads in a corridor that parallels but does not abut the highway. This would accomplish the CPOS goal of connecting Doney Park, Timberline, and Fernwood neighborhoods to nearby Forest and City trails. It would also avoid purchase of

costly easements across private land, and create an opportunity to reduce the high density of user-made roads and trails in the area west of the highway.

- 2004 CNF Peaks View Ranger District reviewed the proposed project, its role, benefits and drawbacks. After discussion with County staff, it recommended the Forest participate. Implementation steps included further discussion on long-term trail management and flexibility of route to respond to potential NEPA issues followed by development of an interagency agreement and associated collection agreement. The Forest anticipated moving the project forward in FY 2005.
- 2004 September: County Board of Supervisors reviewed trail planning in work session. BOS reviewed goals of the Northeast Peaks Trails Alliance and a map of the proposed corridor that is within the Forest and parallels the highway.
- 2005 May: BOS received an update on planning for the proposed Timberline Trail. The project was described as “converting a two-track road, establishing trailheads, improving the surface where needed, and obliterating unnecessary roads.” Members of the Northeast Peaks Trails Alliance conducted two work days to support the Forest Service in making improvements to area trails.
- 2005 September: County Board of Supervisors approved a Cooperation Agreement between Flagstaff Biking Organization, Coconino National Forest and the County for the purpose of planning and implementing Flagstaff area trails pursuant to the *Flagstaff Area Open Space and Greenways Plan* and other area plans. This master agreement laid the foundation for interagency cooperation.
- 2005-6 Forest unable to finance required planning to access the proposed trail’s potential impacts to biological and archeological resources.
- 2007 September: CCPR Director approved a collection agreement of \$28,455 to underwrite the expenses of required planning to comply with the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- 2008 August: Forest advised the County it has begun work on NEPA planning.
- 2008 October: Forest invited the County to a pre-NEPA public meeting on 11/15/08 and asked for contact information on persons previously involved in the project.
- 2008 November: County participated in a pre-NEPA public meeting with 41 neighbors attending, many from McCann Estates. Greatest concern was that the meeting was poorly noticed. Second greatest concern is that the proposed trailhead on Forest Road would worsen a dirt road already in poor condition. County and Forest met on 11/19/08 to review public comments and propose changes to the project scope to address significant concerns.
- 2008 December: CCPR Director approved a one-year extension of the collection agreement with CNF for NEPA planning.
- 2009 January 14: Forest will host a second pre-NEPA public meeting to better describe the project, present proposed changes to the project based on comment received to date, and invite additional public comment.